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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies various elements of presidential libraries. The advantages and disadvantages of the libraries' centralization or decentralization are discussed, and some common misconceptions held by the public as to the role and function of presidential libraries are identified. Criticism and debate from the professional community about whether presidential libraries have degenerated into costly monuments rather than true archives are presented, and major presidential library contributions are reviewed. The geographic dispersion of the libraries and their impact upon, and ties with, the surrounding communities are considered. In addition, the impact of presidential foundations (e.g., the Jimmy Carter Foundation and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation) and other foundations on the libraries is explored. The balance between the museum and archival functions, and the two separate clienteles who are attracted to these two roles are also described. Also identified are some common experiences shared by these libraries as they pass through their life-cycle: (1) the development/nascent stage; (2) the professional use/research stage; and (3) the mature library. The challenges faced by one such mature library, the Herbert Hoover Library, are outlined and the future of all presidential libraries is considered. (21 references) (MAB)

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THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES

Linda Fischer
Ronald Reagan Library
September, 1991

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Introduction and Background

From the vantage point of a new Presidential Library, an archivist's immediate future seems clear: to fulfill the institution's core archival function of processing the holdings and providing reference service. But what do archivists do after the collections have been processed? What happens to a Presidential Library when researchers come in fewer numbers and use the holdings less and less? The ongoing debate surrounding the continuing function of Presidential Libraries suggests that many of the challenges these institutions face are symptomatic of their very nature: their respective attention to a single individual's life limits the scope of their holdings and defines the solicitation and oral history strategy the institution adopts. Moreover, Presidential Libraries are civic institutions which must serve public needs if they are to justify their continued existence in their current form.

Within the Presidential Library system, there are almost as many opinions about the proper role and function of the Libraries as there are employees. Staff members from the Library with the oldest documents--the Hoover Library--and from the youngest fully functioning Library--the Carter Library--present divergent perspectives regarding the extent to which an archives should depart from its core mission to undertake auxiliary programs. An examination of these differences will demonstrate not only the

unique characteristics of each Library, but will reveal that Libraries experience some common themes as they pass through three developmental stages. Archivists who understand these currents will be better able to help their facility adjust to a seemingly uncertain future.

Centralization and Decentralization

Some critics have argued that a more "cost-effective" means of preserving and making available historically valuable documents would be to house the collections in a central presidential library similar to the National Archives building for federal records in Washington, DC. When Presidents donate their papers to the federal government, they also supply the building which houses the materials. The central library argument might arise again since Presidential records are now the property of the Federal government. But, just as the National Archives has regional facilities, one could argue that presidential libraries can and do play an important social and cultural role, defined in the broad sense, in their respective communities. A clarification of this role may well help an aging library retain its vitality after its primary function appears essentially to have been met. Before the tenth library begins to take shape--the George Bush Library in College Station, Texas--perhaps those involved with Presidential Libraries should take stock in how the public and those within the Presidential Library

system view the libraries, the stages a developing library goes through, and the potential future of those facilities.

Current Thinking and Practices

The role and function of presidential libraries must begin with a clear understanding of what these institutions have and do. The main misperception, chiefly among the public, is that these libraries contain circulating books; few people realize that a presidential library is primarily a manuscript repository and a showcase for presidential artifacts. The second major misperception is about who finances the cost of building the facility, and, relatedly, who owns the building. Most individuals think that "the government" pays for the entire cost of the building or that the staff works for the former President. Although the unique blend of private funding and public control has contributed to the public confusion about who we are and what we do, one can argue that this relationship is the institution's greatest strength.

"A Suitable Kind of Monument"

Criticisms

Beyond the public's misperceptions about presidential libraries, the system has come under fire from the professional community as well. The core criticism, as expressed by the social scientist, Arnold Hirshon, is that presidential libraries have outlived their usefulness in their present form. The

"concept of Presidential Libraries was probably helpful in its time," he argues, "but the viability of such institutions, in their present form, is doubtful." While the libraries once provided uniform control and access, they have degenerated, according to Hirshon, into costly "monuments" rather than true archives.[1]

Many of Hirshon's fears of escalating costs and misdirected functions are checked, to a certain extent, by the Presidential Libraries Act (PLA) of 1986. The Act recognizes both the archival and museum functions of a Presidential Library and limits the area of a Library building to 70,000 square feet. This space restriction will particularly limit the area devoted to the Presidential museum. The Act also requires that Presidential Foundations donate a Library site, building, and equipment and provide for an endowment for Library maintenance. The Act authorizes the Archivist of the United States to open a trust fund account for accepting (and encouraging) private donations to a Library. The Act, therefore, addresses Hirshon's concerns about the public cost and mandate of Presidential Libraries.[2]

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[1]Arnold Hirshon, "The Scope, Accessibility, and History of Presidential Papers," Government Publications Review 1 (1974): 374.

[2]Frank Schick, with Rene Schick and Mark Carroll, Records of the Presidency: Presidential Papers and Libraries from Washington to Reagan (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1989), 18.

Library Contributions

While Hirshon's criticism may have had some validity, James O'Neill was not disturbed by it. For O'Neill, who was, contemporarily, the deputy archivist of the United States, a library combines two elements: a "monument to vanity" and a "memorial to achievement." As he pointed out, "so long as men continue to honor their own and their fellows' achievements . . . monuments of one sort or another will continue to be built. What is significant is not that a presidential library is a monument but that it is a particular kind, and a particularly suitable kind, of monument."[3] Their suitability rests, in large part, in the cultural role they play in their communities. One historian, Catherine Albanese, would argue that monuments, maintained at public expense and "the object of pilgrimage by tourists," represent America's "civil religion." Specifically, geography Professor, Kenneth Foote, argues that archival documents and artifacts extend the "temporal and spatial range of human communication" by providing durable vehicles for transmitting information "beyond the bounds of interpersonal contact."[4]

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[3]James E. O'Neill, "Will Success Spoil the Presidential Libraries?," American Archivist 36 (July 1973): 347.

[4]Kenneth Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture," American Archivist 53 (Summer 1990): 379, 384-385, 392.

Benedict Zobrist, Director of the Truman Library, defines the Presidential Library's role in this context: "when we preserve [documents], we prove our commitment to the values on which our society has been built, and it is on the basis of these materials that posterity will make its judgment of our lives and times."[5] Americans build monuments to remind us of, and to communicate to others, our political heritage. When the edifices are visibly situated, they become central democratic institutions.

The creation of a "monument" results from what John Wickman, former Director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, sees as the distinguishing factor of the Presidential Library: the "creative juxtaposition [of] the manuscripts, museum objects, and physical settings associated with a former President."[6] According to the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Don Wilson, Presidential Libraries make two significant contributions to the cultural landscape. First of all, the libraries preserve and make available, in a timely fashion, the papers of the President and his advisors. While this goal continues to be the primary function of the presidential library, with attention to the needs of the academic community, the second contribution, that of

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[5]Benedict Zobrist, "The Long-Term Significance of Presidential Libraries," Whistle Stop: Harry S. Truman Library Institute Newsletter 11 (1983): [no page].

[6]John Wickman, "The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library: Its Goal if Infinity," Special Libraries 60 (November 1969): 593.

raising "public consciousness of the burdens of presidential decisions," serves as the main duty of the presidential museum, the facility's most popular attraction.[7] As Richard Norton Smith, Director of the Hoover Library, explains, "like the office they commemorate, presidential libraries are living institutions . . . . They are not monuments to one person alone. Rather, they are storehouses of information and classrooms for democratic instruction."[8] In so doing, the libraries serve two separate and distinct clientele, dispensing cultural information to a broader cross-section of the public than it would have with just one of the two components.

Geographic Dispersion

The geographic dispersion of the libraries has bolstered their ability to fulfill their primary mission and play a significant cultural role. Remote areas especially have looked to the presidential library to provide noted and respected primary source collections that it otherwise might not have. The development of research facilities, and especially of manuscript collections, do not keep pace with the growth of local colleges

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[7]Don Wilson, "Presidential Libraries," Prologue 21 (Summer 1989): 100.

[8]Richard Norton Smith, "A Presidential Revival: How the Hoover Library Overcame a Mid-Life Crisis," Prologue 21 (Summer 1989): 116.

and universities. William Aeschbacher, former Director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, noted that the building of three Presidential Libraries in the Missouri Valley--the Truman, Eisenhower, and Hoover Libraries--made "a profound change in the research available in the Midwest." Moreover, "these libraries and these kinds of collections," Aeschbacher wrote, "were not known--indeed, they were hardly envisioned--a half, even a quarter century ago. Yet they are of such a nature that they now must be consulted by anyone making a serious study of the periods with which they deal."[9]

Although presidential libraries may make a more dramatic impact in rural areas, their cultural contribution to urban or collegiate areas remains every bit as significant, bringing to other local collections a new historical dimension. The collections documenting a man's political apex recasts the discussion of his political start. Conversely, the early stages of a public career informs and defines the debate surrounding his presidency. "What are essentially local or regional topics," Aeschbacher argues, "can be given national perspective by comparison with similar problems appearing in the Presidential files."[10]

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[9]William D. Aeschbacher, "Presidential Libraries: New Dimension in Research Facilities," Midwest Quarterly 6 (January 1965): 207.

[10]Ibid., 213.

Community Ties

Because the President determines where his papers will be housed, each Library develops a unique relationship with the surrounding community. Whereas the first several Presidents after Franklin Roosevelt situated their libraries in their hometowns in remote areas, more recent Presidents have built their Libraries on or near research universities in their home states. According to David Horrocks, Supervisory Archivist at the Gerald Ford Library, each means of developing a library has its distinct advantages. The libraries on universities have a local clientele and an academic environment compatible with the Archive's primary mission and conducive to supporting symposia, conferences, and lectures. Although hometown libraries are not in strong research settings, they have distinctive community appeal and have the advantage of being historic sites. As Timothy Walch, Assistant Director of the Herbert Hoover Library pointed out, Presidential libraries in remote areas become significant cultural assets because there are fewer cultural institutions with "overlapping mandates." The Hoover Library in West Branch, Iowa, in conjunction with the Hoover Association, plays a relatively stronger cultural role, becoming a forum for

simple theatrical productions in addition to meeting its research and museum demands.[11]

The Role of Foundations

The extent to which a library can sponsor auxiliary events, depends in large part, on how able it is to fulfill its primary archival function. The strength of the Presidential Library system--the blend of public and private funding--allows the institution to focus its allocated resources on its mandated mission while using private Presidential Foundation money to support auxiliary functions. The breadth of a Library's cultural role, therefore, hinges on how active the Presidential Foundation chooses to be. To a certain extent, the types of programs a Library offers is dependent on what the former President and his family wish to pursue. Their support for programs such as sponsoring lectures, conferences, symposia, research grants, and publication awards, affects significantly the role the library plays. Without these programs, the library may serve only a narrow clientele; with these programs, the library may develop a reputation for actively engaging in broad social, political, economic, and cultural activities and for supporting scholarship on the national level.

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[11]David Horrocks, interview by author, May 28, 1991; Timothy Walch, interview by author, May 28, 1991; Johnson County Weekend Advertiser, April 20, 1991, 17.

The Jimmy Carter Foundation

The variation in Foundation support at the various Libraries indicates the independent development of each of the Libraries. The Jimmy Carter Foundation primarily supports the activities and interests of an active former President, including famine relief and helping the homeless, which require a great deal of money. Consequently, the Foundation does not financially support the Carter Library and the Library has had to focus only on fulfilling its core archival mission. While the Library is in its early years of development, this focus may be entirely appropriate. As President Carter becomes less active, his Foundation may begin to direct some of its resources to the Library's needs, although the Carter Center, which is run by the Foundation, eventually will be turned over to Emory University and not to the Carter Library. According to Martin Elzy, Assistant Director of the Carter Library, the Library has sufficient processing and reference activity to occupy the staff for the next three to four decades, and he does not necessarily see the future need (or have the desire) to make the Library's collections available to school-aged children.[12]

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[12]Martin Elzy, interview by author, May 28, 1991.

The Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation

The Lyndon B. Johnson Foundation serves as a model for active support of a Library's functions. The Foundation does not have its own agenda, and it was established in 1968 with the sole purpose of helping the Johnson Library. Within the Presidential Library system, it alone directly finances a portion of the Library's daily operating costs including audio-visual preservation, museum exhibits, preparing oral histories, purchasing archival supplies, and funding staff travel. This support allows the Library museum to charge no admission fee. Additionally, the Foundation supports the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and funds research grants, a speakers program, and symposia. Moreover, the members of the Foundation Board provide the clout to attract recognized individuals for the speakers program.[13]

Other Foundations

More typically, a Presidential Foundation supports the auxiliary programs that the Libraries might not otherwise be able to sponsor. According to David Horrocks, the Ford Foundation plays a crucial role in the conduct of the Ford Library's public programs, including supporting a speakers program and providing a research grant fund of up to $20,000 a year. Moreover, according

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[13]Charles Corkran, interview by author, May 29, 1991.

to Dennis Daellenbach, formerly Assistant Director of the Ford Library, that institution has initiated, at the behest of Former President Ford, symposia of current issues and events based on the Library's collections. The Truman Library Institute initially financed research grants to that Library but recently has begun focussing on public programs and the museum, a shift that may well reflect the transition of that Library from primarily serving scholarly researchers to mainly serving the general public.[14]

Who the Library Serves

Ever since the opening of the Franklin Roosevelt Library in 1941, the Libraries have attracted two separate clientele. While the archives respond to the needs of the scholarly community, the museums draw the interest of the general public. Until 1986, the laws governing the Presidential Libraries have addressed archival questions. With the passage of the Presidential Libraries Act of 1986, the law incorporated the term "museum" for the first time, thereby legitimating the appropriateness of the Presidential exhibit within the Presidential Library.

There is some debate within the Library system about the proper balance between the museum and archival functions. Martin Elzy holds the position that the archives exists to serve

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[14]Horrocks interview; Dennis Daellenbach interview by author, July 23, 1991; George Curtis interview by author, May 29, 1991.

professional researchers such as journalists, and college and university students and faculty; it does not exist to serve the general public or school age children. At the other end of the spectrum, Timothy Walch defends the Hoover Library's broad application of its mission to include a program called "Making History Come Alive," an "interactive activity" for school children. Additionally, the Hoover Library, with the assistance of the Hoover Association, presents one-person plays of historical figures. According to the Assistant Director of the Harry Truman Library, George Curtis, the focus for a young Library should be on archival activity, becoming more involved in public programs only as the facility ages. Although one could dismiss these differences as reflecting the age of the two libraries, the Ford Library had already begun a strong education program.[15] Clearly, then, the role each Library assumes depends upon its particular locale, the size of its holdings, and the desires of the Former President and his family, Library Director and Presidential Foundation. As long as a Library thoroughly satisfies its core mission, the institution, as part of its civic responsibility, can arguably serve as broad a clientele as possible, thereby obviating any criticism of elitism.

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[15]Interviews Elzy, Walch, Curtis, and Horrocks.

A Library's Life-Cycle

A Library's role, therefore, changes as the facility passes through a series of stages in its "life-cycle." In 1989, the office of Presidential Libraries conducted an internal study of Library staffing structures which described three phases in a Presidential Library's life-cycle. Those three phases correspond to three stages identified by the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Don Wilson: "museum development and archival processing"; a "professional use or research period"; and the "nostalgia period."[16] These stages are, of course, modified by the unique characteristics of each Presidential Library, such as the length of a President's tenure, the resulting size of the holdings, the legislative and judicial mandate to release documents, and the support a library receives, in public or private financing, to do its job.

Phase I Library: The Development Stage

Phase I or the "museum development and archival processing" stage begins while the staff works as a "materials project," initiating reference projects and assisting the museum staff in preparing the initial exhibits. The archival staff concentrates on achieving precise intellectual and physical control over the holdings in expectation of moving them to the permanent site. In

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[16]Wilson, "Presidential Libraries," 101.

so doing, they become familiar with the holdings and with processing highly visible but generally open file segments; fulfill reference requests from the former President's office, the current executive, Congress, and the judiciary; provide courtesy reference service to the general public; and assist the Foundation in preparing the museum exhibits for the Library's dedication. Compared to other archival facilities within and outside NARA, Presidential Libraries provide the public with rapid access to the historical record. "Most often," Dr. Wilson boasts, "archival research is under way within five years of a president leaving office, a circumstance unequalled anywhere else in the world."[17]

The only National Archives facility which continues to process and make available the records of a presidency as a materials project staff is the Richard Nixon project in Alexandria, Virginia. The peculiar experience surrounding the confiscation of President Nixon's papers, and the resulting legislation governing their preservation, will keep the collections in the Washington, DC area for the foreseeable future. As a result, members of that staff have devoted their time to processing the papers and servicing reference requests; they have only recently assisted the private Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace in building a museum exhibit. Library project archivists have not been able to perform other tasks,

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[17]Ibid., 100.

such as initiating oral history or solicitation programs, much less to consider public outreach activities.

Phase I: The Nascent Stage

Once a Library has been dedicated, the presidential museum is open to the public and the manuscript repository, if not opened simultaneously, will follow soon. The nascent library continues to focus on arranging, describing, and reviewing the papers and making them available to the public. Scholars, journalists, and popular writers, are among the first to use the holdings, anticipating the availability of new file segments. Increasingly, the archival staff addresses mandatory review requests and initiates oral history and solicitation programs to capture both the memories and the documents of key individuals surrounding the President. Moreover, newer libraries, Ruth Bordin and Robert Warner point out, have a great bulk of material, all of which may not merit preservation and indeed may undergo further appraisal activities. The size of the museum staff grows, perhaps adding an education specialist to arrange museum tours and to forge stronger links with the surrounding schools. The Library may also consider hiring a public affairs specialist who will guide the Library's media activities. Of the

Libraries interviewed, the Carter and Ford Libraries clearly fall under this first stage.[18]

The Gerald Ford Library is unique in the system because it separated the presidential museum from the archival repository. Warner sees this division as "a decision for archives," not one against museums, contending that researchers do not find the proximity of museum objects to be crucial to their work. The three hour drive between Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor, however, splits apart the "creative juxtaposition" identified by Wickman. While the Ford Library in Ann Arbor avoids becoming one of the system's "modern pyramids," as Warner sees them, it also loses a significant civic element. At this early stage in the life-cycle, the separation may not matter much. As the facility nears the "nostalgia" phase, the archives may be faced with declining public interest. David Horrocks speculated that the Ford Library will not be doomed to stagnate as it ages but may take its cue from the success of the Roosevelt, Hoover, and Eisenhower Libraries in remaining active with public programs.[19]

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[18]Ruth B. Bordin, and Robert M. Warner, The Modern Manuscript Library, (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1966), 5-6; Sister Louise Lovely, "The Evolution of Presidential Libraries," Government Publications Review 6 (1979): 29.

[19]Robert M. Warner, "The Prologue is Past," American Archivist 18 (January 1978): 12-13; Horrocks interview.

Phase II: Professional Use or Research Stage

Twenty-five years after opening, a Library is squarely in a "professional use or research period." A library has met most of its primary solicitation and oral history goals and archivists undertake long-term processing projects including more detailed descriptions of the collections. Reference activity reaches its peak; as the more sensitive papers are made available through mandatory review and declassification, scholars, a generation removed from the period they are studying, plod through the boxes, looking for the documents to cement their careers.

The Johnson and Truman Libraries are examples of facilities in this stage. Charles Corkran of the Johnson Library estimated that two-thirds of the collections were open to research use and that processing would not be completed for another ten to fifteen years. With key documents and collections yet to be made available, research interest in that Library's holdings will remain high for the foreseeable future. An archivist's role during this phase is one of critically linking the primary sources to those interpreting them. The presidential library, therefore, has preserved and made available the material which forms the foundation for scholarly debate, strengthening academia specifically and the humanities generally. A library, with its Foundation's assistance, might also sponsor conferences to allow researchers to present their arguments to their peers in an open forum. Harry Truman fashioned his facility to "not be a personal

memorial, but a government-owned center for research." In so doing, the Truman Library "pioneered for other presidential libraries and similar organizations in fostering research and bringing together scholars and public figures."[20]

Phase III: The Mature Library

Phase III marks the beginning of the "mature" library, a facility whose archival staff spends a relatively greater amount of time on reference rather than on processing activity. The primary oral history and solicitation efforts will have been completed and a library may be receiving only small or fairly insignificant additional collections. Declassification, although still a part of the Library's operation, loses its intensity when documents become fifty years old. In 1979, one author estimated the percentage of closed material at the older libraries: the Roosevelt Library had less that one tenth of one percent, the Truman Library had approximately three percent, and the Hoover Library had about two percent. With reduced researcher interest and little processing to do, the library requires a smaller staff, losing archivists to attrition.[21]

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[20]Corkran interview; Donald R. McCoy, The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934-1968 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 292, 299-300.

[21]The figure for the Hoover Library might be misleading since it accounts for only the domestic policy papers; the foreign policy papers remain at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University. Lovely, 29, although she does not provide any documentation for her statistics; Warner and Bordin, 5-6.

The crux of the problem for older libraries, as Warner sees it, is that they cannot rely on museums to maintain public interest. "Presidential libraries will have to accept the fact that the research usefulness of these institutions needs reexamination." Even though the museums draw a larger number of patrons than do the libraries, they do not attract the kind of people who would use the libraries' resources, nor does the public's attraction bolster the resources available. Because Libraries must operate on their own, they have broadened their traditional functions and adopted "some useful and innovative programs" to keep researcher interest alive. He warns that Presidential libraries "must change if they are not to become expensive fossils of limited use to the research community and to the archival profession."[22]

The Herbert Hoover Library

The Hoover Library, under the Direction of Richard Norton Smith, has met one of the challenges posed by the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Don Wilson. As Dr. Wilson recently explained, "in order to retain its relevance, the mature [presidential] library must intensify its outside activities." Wilson defined two paths for a library to follow: "We face a choice in this phase of . . . stagnation, or . . . reaching out

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[22]Warner, 13, 15.

aggressively to non-academic audiences to make history come alive."[23] At the Hoover Library, Smith initiated a three part plan to help his facility survive its "mid-life crisis." Without compromising its reputation as a first-rate archival repository, Smith hoped that public programs and "cooperative ventures with other museums, libraries, and historical organizations" would help the Library raise its visibility as a national center for historical research and become a premier cultural asset for the entire Midwest.[24]

During the last few years, the Hoover Library museum has staged a number of exhibits which have attracted a substantial number of visitors. On the archival side, the facility re-initiated a solicitation program focussing on collections which would supplement particular subject area interests in their files whether or not the collections were directly relevant to Hoover himself.[25] While Timothy Walch, the Hoover Library's Assistant Director, cautioned that he did not believe that this type of policy should be undertaken by a library during an earlier phase of its development, he did think that the Hoover Library, prior to Smith's assuming the Director's position, had fallen into a nostalgia stage. The definitive works about that President had

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[23]"National Archivist Says Activity Healthy for Hayes Center," News-Messenger (Freemont, Ohio), May 31, 1991.

[24]Smith, 117.

[25]Walch interview.

been written and researchers had less reason to visit the facility in West Branch, Iowa. As Walch commented, the new collections have added value to the Presidential papers and have renewed research interest in the facility. The Library has also published documentary works, expanded its ties to the University of Iowa, and co-sponsored the Center for the Study of the Recent History of the United States.[26]

The Road Ahead

Archivists within the Presidential Library system have debated the efficacy of drawing interest into the Libraries by expanding their role. George Curtis, Assistant Director of the Truman Library, speculated that the current trend toward outreach may be, in the long run, an experiment in trying to strike a balance between an archives focussing on its core mission and offering supplementary public programs. He hoped that this balance might be found in processing the collections to an even greater extent, creating museum exhibits which speak to a more highly educated audience, and publishing collections to make them more widely available. Moreover, Curtis cautioned that a successful Library may not be judged by the number of visitors it has but may be measured by the quality of work it has produced.[27]

Curtis may be proven correct that many of the projects

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[26]Ibid.; Smith, 117, 120.

[27]Curtis interview.

falling under the realm of outreach and public programs were just exercises in experimentation. But future archivists will be able to make that determination only if the process of implementing new ideas continues. Curtis's point that these programs should never overshadow the core purpose of the Presidential Libraries is one that everyone in Presidential Libraries should take to heart. Any other programs that a Library may want to sponsor will be done based upon the obligations established by the former President and his family, the age of the facility, the staff resources available, and additional private funding.

A Library may only faintly resemble its earlier manifestation. Certain programs are rightly pursued only during certain stages in a Library's development. A first stage Library should not engage in activities which drain its resources away from processing and reference. Establishing outreach programs with colleges and universities may not take too much effort and may provide for a lasting relationship that the Library will come to greatly appreciate as the facility ages. Developing outreach projects for school-aged children, such as educational packets, should come during a Library's second stage when the archives has made available a sizable portion of its holdings.

A Library in the third stage of its development has the greatest need for programs to keep interest alive but it should resist adopting programs which may be at odds with its core mission. While the Hoover Library has undertaken many commendable projects, such as publishing documents and sponsoring

conferences, it has raised critical archival questions by initiating a new solicitation policy based on acquiring collections which bear no direct relationship to the former President. Have all the sources directly related to Herbert Hoover been acquired and thoroughly processed? Is the Library competing with other manuscript gathering institutions for collections which bear only an indirect connection to Hoover or his presidency? Is the National Archives the proper entity to solicit the papers? Is the Federal government trying to overstep its mandate?

Ralph Bledsoe, Director of the Ronald Reagan Library, recognizes that a Presidential Library plays an official role as a local representative of the Federal government. Since there are so few Presidential Libraries, Bledsoe argues, each facility can play a unique role in its community; it may be the only federal government installation with high and positive public recognition in its immediate area. As such, the library can become a political resource for the local community. As he sees it, the library may well be a vital link to Washington with the library staff assisting the public in knowing how the national government is structured, how it operates, and what agencies exist for the public benefit. The more experience the Library staff acquires in addressing questions about the organization of the Executive Branch of the Federal government, the better able they will be to assist archival researchers in the nuances of the White House staff offices.

Those Libraries that weather best the "nostalgia" phase will continue to have strong private support to supplement their operating budgets--support that may mean the difference between a Library focusing exclusively on its core mission and a Library which can sponsor a wide variety of educational programs. Strong private financial support will allow these very special public institutions to promote their civic responsibilities and to address the needs and interests of the many and not just of the few.

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